

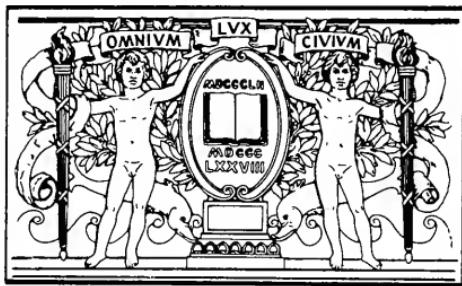
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City Document. — No. 13.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

OF

HIS HONOR THEODORE OTIS,

Mayor of Roxbury,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CITY COUNCIL,

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 3, 1861.



PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

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ROXBURY:

L. B. & O. E. WESTON, PRINTERS, GUILD ROW.

1861.

City of Roxbury.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, January 3, 1861.

ORDERED, That twenty-five hundred copies of the Address of His Honor the Mayor, be printed for the use of the City Council, and for distribution to the Citizens.

Sent up for concurrence.

FRANKLIN WILLIAMS, *Clerk.*

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, January 3, 1861.

Concurred.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk.*

City of Roxbury.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, January 3, 1861.

Alderman FROST offered the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the thanks of this Board be tendered to His Honor Mayor Otis, for the able, dignified, and impartial manner in which he has presided over its deliberations during the past municipal year, and for the faithful and devoted manner in which he has discharged the varied duties devolving upon him in his official capacity as Mayor of this City.

Resolved, That on his retirement from the office of Mayor, which he has filled with so much credit to himself and honor to the City, he has the united wishes of this Board for his future health, happiness, and prosperity.

The Common Council having expressed a wish to be present during the delivery of the Mayor's Valedictory Address, a Convention of the two branches was held in the Council Chamber, when the MAYOR responded to the foregoing Resolves, in the following

ADDRESS:

GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

In responding to the very flattering resolutions you have just passed, I am aware that they may be regarded as the mere ceremony of the hour; I am aware, also, no one can be more so, of the many short comings, imperfect service and great deficiencies on my part; but when I reflect that during the two years I have had the pleasure of being connected with the Government, every member of each Branch, has treated me with the greatest kindness and friendship, that no personal or party animosity or dis-

trust has ever interrupted for a moment our friendly intercourse; that the various measures brought forward have received the cordial and nearly unanimous support of all, I am encouraged to consider them as the genuine expression of your continued kind regard.

Accept, therefore, my grateful acknowledgments for the complimentary manner in which you are pleased to refer to my services.

The Mayor of a City, Gentlemen, in addition to the specific duties assigned him by its charter, is expected to assume all the responsibility, and solve all the difficulties that arise. If aided, as I have been, by the cheerful assistance and support of the other members of Government, his task is greatly relieved; but in addition to this, the abundant confidence, sympathy and kindness which he is sure to enjoy from his fellow-citizens, transforms many labors into genuine pleasures.

If at this Board I have been able to perform my duties acceptably, let me ascribe it to your forbearance, indulgence and kindness. Faithful and prompt in attendance here, kind, conciliatory or firm, as the occasion required, diligent in the discharge of business entrusted to your care, you have made the duty of presiding officer easy and agreeable.

The amount of labor performed by the Government during the past two years, both on account of the steady growth of our city, and also from the magnitude of some of the undertakings, has consumed much of the valuable time of members of both branches. The diligence, fidelity and unselfishness with which those labors have been performed, entitles you to the thanks and gratitude of your fellow-citizens, which I have no doubt you will abundantly receive.

Gentlemen, while I feel under special obligations to the Board over which I have presided, and where most of my labor has been performed, it gives me great pleasure to

acknowledge to every member of the Common Council, my appreciation of their valuable assistance, uniform kindness and courtesy during my official service, and to extend with added emphasis my heartfelt thanks to the City Clerk and Treasurer, for their experienced counsel, advice and assistance, whenever required. I desire, also, to bear testimony to the fidelity and promptness of the Messenger, and my indebtedness to all the heads of the various departments of the Government, for unvarying kindness.

In reviewing rapidly some of the more prominent transactions of the past two years, it is gratifying to find that the extra expenditures have been for the most important objects for which money is appropriated and paid out, embraced mainly under three heads, viz.:

1st. For the promotion of business and general prosperity of the city, in laying out and building new streets, widening, grading and repairing of old.

2nd. For the promotion of health, in construction of sewers, raising the grade of streets above the marsh level, purchase of Parks.

3rd. For the promotion of education, in the construction of school-houses.

Large expenditures have been made during the past two years in widening streets. In selecting those to be widened, the Committee have been governed by three considerations.

1st. Urgent necessity, like Tremont, &c.

2nd. Those that needed and would ultimately have to be widened, and where no buildings or other reasons made it expensive to do it now,— Washington street, for instance.

3rd. Those cases where abutters held out inducements in the low price of land, such as Lambert Avenue, Dennis and Heath streets.

Can any one who reflects upon the steady and rapid increase of this city in wealth and population, nearly doubling in ten years, doubt the wisdom of anticipating the future, and making such improvements now, as experience has demonstrated will be required ere long, at comparatively less expense.

TREMONT STREET.

By the action of our predecessors, the policy of widening Tremont street was commenced in 1858, and the orders passed for taking various pieces of land, and a number of buildings moved back, to make this street eighty feet wide. The first question of importance, almost, after our organization, and apparently the only one on this subject, was, How can the work be done most economically for the city, and all parties interested? No street in the city is so much used — three-quarters, probably, of the heavy teaming of Roxbury passes over this great highway to and from Boston. It is, as it were, the backbone of the city. It contains three water pipes, a gas pipe, two railroad tracks, and will soon have to furnish room for a trunk sewer. It dictates the grade to all collateral streets leading into it, and the sewers they shall ultimately contain. How absolutely necessary, then, that its grade and width should be established! It was necessary, therefore, not only to take a strip of land three-quarters of a mile long and twenty feet wide, in part covered with buildings, but to bring the street to the test of the engineer's grade, causing many fills and cuts, and heavy damage to the abutting estates.

Careful examination was made of the value of each lot of land to be taken, estimates made of the expense of moving buildings, &c., and agreements made with the abutters for almost every piece of land, on the basis that if the land was put at a fair price the whole undertaking should be done at once.

Fortunately, when the matter was brought before the

Government for its decision, there was not a dissenting voice upon the course to be pursued. To the energy, fairness and good judgment of the Alderman of Ward 2, then in the Council, great credit is due. It has proved the most successful widening of a street ever accomplished in Roxbury, as demonstrated by two conclusive tests. 1st, The approval of almost the entire population of the city. 2nd, That land upon it has risen at least 20 per cent. in value.

The bearing of this large expenditure upon the claims and demands of citizens in other parts of the city for necessary and reasonable improvements, is obvious; and to this beginning may be largely ascribed other undertakings, which must be the excuse if this subject has been dwelt upon at too great length.

A new and important street (long sought for by some of our most respected citizens), fifty feet wide, has been constructed from Centre to Parker street,— New Heath Street,— which will develop and enhance the value of some two or three hundred acres of land, before very poorly accommodated with access to business, and consequently assessed at a very low rate, and paying but light taxes. That part of the city is now very directly connected with the centre, where are the schools, churches, stores, and business generally.

The amount of land taken for this street is over 50,000 feet.

The whole expense of land and construction is about \$10,000.

Another new street, forty feet wide, has been laid out, constructed and widened, from Dudley to Eustis street, called Winslow street.

The amount of land taken is over 20,000 feet, at an expense, including construction, of about \$12,000.

This street is of local advantage, has increased the

value of property, promoted building in the vicinity, is a protection against a wide spreading fire, and will very much facilitate the drainage of that locality.

A private street from Warren street to Grove Hall Avenue, forty feet wide, and half a mile in length, has been laid out as a public street, at trifling expense, which will prove of essential benefit to that part of the city.

Heath street has been widened by adding nearly 14,000 feet to it, making it, most of its entire length from Parker street west, forty feet wide, at very little expense, except moving the stone-walls and fences. The land for this widening, obtained without payment, was one of the advantages promised by abutters if New Heath street was laid out.

Dennis street, at the extreme easterly part of the city, very old and crooked, and in places but twenty feet wide, has been, after much conference with the abutters, laid out to their and the public approval, thirty-five feet wide, the walls set back, and part of it constructed. By doing it now, the land damages are trifling. The amount of land added to the street is 8700 square feet, at a cost of \$240.

LAMBERT AVENUE.

In September, 1859, a petition was presented to the Government, signed by most of the abutters on Lambert Avenue, asking its acceptance. They relied on the action of the town, in 1845, when, in open town meeting, it was voted, to accept the street *whenever* the abutters would contribute to the width of the street some 1200 or 1500 feet of land, lying between Lambert and Porter streets, and fix the sidewalk. This the petitioners now offered to do. The Committee on Streets, to whom the petition was referred, were *unanimously* of opinion that the City were bound by the action of the Town; that a change in the form of managing our affairs, from Selectmen to a City Council, did not release us; that the lapse of time did not,

for no limit was fixed within which the conditions should be performed. Should they dishonorably try to evade, deny or postpone the duty resting upon the City? They did not think it proper to do either. In addition to this, it was admitted, that the street had been open for so many years that it had become one of the public highways, and could not be closed up. It was dangerously narrow, only twenty-two feet wide, much used, with a very steep grade. The Committee saw that, if accepted in accordance with the petition, the next step would be another petition, to have it widened and graded at the City's expense. It seemed, therefore, judicious to obtain the coöperation of the abutters, to have it widened and graded at once. In this effort, they were met, with a single exception, liberally; one gentleman offered to give 1600 feet of land, another two-thirds of the amount to be taken from his estate.

This course, recommended by the Committee, met the approval of the entire Government. The street has been laid out thirty feet wide, thoroughly built and graded, gutters paved, fences set back, edge-stone set (at abutters' expense), sidewalks constructed, 8425 feet of land added to the street, running its entire length of a thousand feet, at an expense of only \$4000. An improvement, for its thoroughness and cheapness, not equalled in the city.

The effect of this outlay is obvious; private enterprise has been encouraged, and one gentleman is spending \$30,000 on his estate.

CEDAR STREET.

Another very important improvement, in this part of the city, is the grading of Cedar street, from Highland street to Shawmut Avenue. This street was laid out fifty feet wide, and kept in repair for twenty-five years by the abutters. In 1858, by the construction of Shawmut Avenue, and the digging then allowed to be done in Cedar street,

it was rendered dangerous, and was otherwise in bad condition. The City incurred the risk of accidents, as it could not be closed, and citizens were, to a great extent, unable to use it. After obtaining from the abutters a release of all claims for damage, the City have graded it through its entire length, and set edge-stone at the abutters' expense, making it one of the most spacious and elegant streets for dwellings in the city, at an expense not exceeding \$3000.

Washington street, the principal thoroughfare, where land brings the highest price of any in the city, has been widened in four different places, cutting off projections, making it uniform, and adding to it 10,000 square feet.

Vernon street has been widened by adding to it some two thousand feet— building a large culvert near Washington street, raising the grade there, and removing the loam from a large portion of the street and filling in stone; thus making it dry and more healthy.

Lesser widenings have been made in Union, Warren, School, Sumner, Bartlett and Walnut streets; making additions to the streets throughout the city of 120,462 square feet, or about three acres. And the amount of land taken for new streets to nearly 70,000 square feet. Total amount, 190,462 square feet.

The average expense for land, damage to buildings, moving buildings, and construction of streets, \$114,000, averaging per foot, sixty cents.

Does not the example of Boston, in her large yearly expenditures for street widenings, and the effort she is now making for widening Washington and Tremont streets, teach us the wisdom of attending to so momentous a subject before buildings are erected, thereby increasing the expense ten fold. Such considerations, I am confident, have influenced you in the performance of your duties.

In addition to the expense of building and widening streets, we have incurred heavy expenses for grading various streets, rendered necessary in consequence of some improvements taking place not under the control of the city. Such, for instance, as the regrading of Warren street, before the Rail Road track could be laid down. Also, the grading of a portion of Walnut street, to carry off the surface water, at the time improvements were going on upon an abutting estate, thus avoiding the payment of large damages. The same may be said of Eustis, Mall, Shawmut Avenue, Centre, Webber, and part of Hunneman streets.

In Lowell street, the Metropolitan Rail Road Company has been required to pave and raise its track, in consequence of which the city regraded much of the street, raised it at its junction with Centre street nearly two feet, paved 1000 yards, set edge-stone one-third its distance, built an expensive bank wall and filled out the street, and blasted off on the opposite side a projecting ledge; thus materially widening it at its narrowest point. Thus much seemed necessary on a street traveled continually with heavy teams.

A portion of these expenditures may have seemed unnecessary to some persons; but no one has complained of improvements in his own vicinity, where he has observed the need of them, but of those in a distant part of the city from himself, where he could not be expected to realize their importance.

A more general system of watering the principal streets has greatly promoted the comfort of our citizens.

During 1859 the profiles of all the streets, both public and private, have been established, to enable the Government to give parties building a permanent grade, that should not be altered with every change of administration.

An idea of the amount of street work may be obtained

by a comparison of the years 1857-8 with 1859-60, as to a few items.

	1857-8.	1859-60.
Edge Stone set, - - - -	22,141 feet;	44,070 feet.
Stone Blocks, - - - -	1,960 tons;	3,869 tons.
Paving, - - - -	6,704 sq. yds.;	22,923 sq. yds.

PROFILES OF STREETS.

There is needed some additional State legislation empowering the Board of Health, or some other department of City and Town Governments to cause buildings to be erected sufficiently high above the flow of the tide to insure drainage, and promote the health of low districts.

One great cause of the large expense to which the City of Roxbury has been subjected, is the numerous private streets that are allowed to be opened upon public avenues before they are fit for acceptance — thus entailing their construction upon the city. This calls for immediate correction. The Committee on Streets have collected valuable information on the subject, which, I doubt not, our successors will make good use of.

SEWERS.

We have constructed a main trunk sewer of large size, and in the most thorough and substantial manner, of brick, from the City Dock, through Davis to Dudley street, a distance of about 1500 feet. Owing to the quicksand encountered, this was a most difficult and expensive work, and great credit is due the Superintendent for the energetic and successful manner in which he accomplished it.

A sewer has been constructed through Fellowes and Northampton streets, of plank, to connect with it.

Brick sewers, of suitable size, have also been constructed in Sumner, Short, part of Eustis, and Mall streets.

The expenditures for sewers have been \$20,000.

In this connection, the filling of Plymouth street, both to promote health and save the City large expenditures in future, was absolutely necessary. After the construction of the Mill-Dam, in Boston, shutting out the force of the tide, builders located their houses at so low a grade, that the City of Boston is now spending some half million of dollars to raise streets and buildings to secure drainage. The construction of Northampton street has operated in the same manner, and shut out the tide from Plymouth street and vicinity. Buildings have been placed upon the marsh level, and the street allowed to be accepted, with an absolute impossibility properly to drain it. Every building, therefore, erected on this grade, made the City poorer instead of richer, as at some time the entire tract, streets, buildings and all, must be raised at her expense. The street has been made sixty feet wide, adding 4435 square feet, and the grade raised ten feet. Probably no more buildings will be placed too low for drainage in that locality. A brick sewer was constructed the entire length of this street, some portion of which, on account of the settling, will have to be reconstructed.

The widening of this street, filling it, raising buildings, and constructing the sewer, have cost \$35,000.

PARKS.

There is one expenditure made during the past year, gentlemen, looking exclusively to the future health, comfort, recreation and amusement of a large city. When Roxbury becomes such, I doubt not a just meed of praise will be awarded the Government of 1860, for its liberal and disinterested policy in purchasing Parks. The great point to secure was the land, before it should be built upon, thereby making it too expensive to obtain. This has been done. After building the streets about them, as contracted for, and some other slight expenditures, let us pay the

interest and await with confidence for their improvement and decoration by posterity.

The amount of land thus set apart is as follows:

Orchard Park;	- - - - -	79,785 sq. feet.
Tremont " "	- - - - -	122,220 "
Washington " "	- - - - -	401,000 "
Or over 14 acres.		
At a cost of	- - - - -	\$63,000
Should the Park on Munroe street be sold, as is contemplated, this amount may be reduced, probably,	- - - - -	<u>8,000</u>
		\$55,000
If to this sum was added the expense of filling the Tremont street Park, two years being allowed from next May for doing the work, and the expense of building a street around Wash- ton Park, say	- - - - -	<u>20,000</u>
The whole amount for Parks will be	- - - - -	\$75,000

In addition to these, we have accepted from the proprie-
tors, Longwood Park, of 21,140 square feet; Highland
Park, of 5600 square feet. These have been fenced, and
form pleasing ornaments to the city.

All these Parks will tend to give increased value to land
in their vicinity, secure good buildings around them, and
insure a desirable population, and will ultimately have a
very favorable influence on the health of the community.
In fact, one of the conditions of purchase of the Park near
Tremont street, is that none but good brick dwellings shall
be built on the land surrounding it.

SCHOOL-HOUSES.

Two years ago our Grammar School accommodations
were not sufficient for the number of pupils. We were
hiring such rooms as we could get, poorly ventilated, cold,
destitute of yard room, and the absolute neccssaries of a
school. From one to two hundred pupils were thus poorly
accommodated. The Committee asked for increased
rooms. The first question was, ought a City like this to
own its school-rooms, or hire? This being answered in

the affirmative, the next question was, Ought not our public buildings to be of brick or stone, plain and substantial, evidences of good taste, simplicity, incombustible, exhibiting a due regard for the lives of pupils, and holding up a proper standard for citizens to imitate in private structures — something in which a public-spirited, patriotic citizen could feel a just pride? After careful and deliberate examination, you decided that the true economy of the City demanded brick additions both to the Comins and the Dearborn school-houses. They were built, and the children of our fellow-citizens and our own are now enjoying them.

About 20,000 feet of land has been purchased near East street, and a substantial brick building, with six large, commodious rooms, has been constructed for primary scholars, and is now ready for occupancy, rendering any further accommodations in that part of the city unnecessary probably for many years.

With a view to improve the school, and lessen the expense of instruction, the Committee concluded to unite the boys and girls in one high school. To carry out this mode of instruction, a suitable building was essential. Without purchasing any land, the dilapidated structure in Kenilworth street is converted into an elegant and commodious edifice, creditable to the architect, the committee, and the city, and expected to supply the wants of the city for a long period.

After the burning of the wooden school-house on Francis street, a larger and more commodious brick building was erected.

These five school-houses have cost over \$53,000, and in some respects more than supply the present demand. With moderate additions, as wanted, so large an expenditure will not again be required.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

A substantial brick engine-house was constructed last year in Eustis street, ornamental to the city. A new hand-engine was also added, and \$1000 worth of leading hose purchased. Four reservoirs of large capacity have been constructed. Seven hydrants have been added to the Jamaica Pond Aqueduct Co. pipes. Four, also, to the Cochituate.

One first class steam fire engine and horse hose-carriage and necessary equipments have been purchased, thus calling in the assistance of tireless steam and horse power to the aid of man in his fearful contest with all consuming fire.

A new and appropriate building, of brick, answering the three-fold purpose of an engine house, stable, and Ward Room, has been erected on Centre street.

When we reflect upon the freedom from fire that we have enjoyed, as compared with some of our neighboring cities, the good order, energy and faithfulness of the Department, we have great reason to be satisfied with the liberal policy pursued towards the firemen, in thus furnishing good houses, engines, reservoirs, &c.

It is believed the Department was never before, as a whole, in so healthy and efficient condition. Great credit is due to the Fire Department and the Committee for such favorable results.

POLICE.

The entire police force, under the thoughtful management of our excellent City Marshal, is believed to be discreet, energetic, and reliable, possessing the confidence and respect of the community.

To carry out so many costly undertakings, in addition to the ordinary expenses of the Government, has of course required a large amount of money. To think of putting it

in the tax bills now, would manifestly be unfair, since much of the outlay is for future advantage. To delay their accomplishment, and thereby greatly increase the expense, was not wise. To borrow the money at five per cent., and do the work at once, was the only plan that commended itself to your judgment.

If these expenditures shall enable our successors to be *judiciously* economical, so much the better.

City Debt, Feb. 1st, 1859,	- - - - -	\$280,240 95
City Debt, Dec: 31st, 1860,	- - - - -	<u>562,525 00</u>
Increase, - - - - -	- - - - -	\$282,284 05
If we deduct the lot of land purchased of Mr. Ellis, -	-	\$12,200
Also the wharf lot, - - - - -	-	6,500
Amount of bills due for edge-stone, - - - - -	-	3,500
Amount likely to be received from Munroe Street Park in consequence of having purchased other Parks,	8,000	<u>\$30,200 00</u>
Increase, - - - - -	- - - - -	\$252,084 05
Amount of City Debt, - - - - -	-	\$532,325 00

Through the instrumentality of a committee appointed for that purpose, the price of gas has been reduced from 12 to 15 per cent., both to the City and the public generally.

The Metropolitan Rail Road track has been laid from the Post Office to Oak street. Also a second track in Warren street to Walnut street. And an extension from Montrose Avenue to Dorchester, with a turn-out and terminus at Dale street. These various extensions are of essential convenience to our community.

You are all aware of the heavy expenditures caused by the tracks of this road in our streets. But it is believed that for the future they will be less, as most of the expensive grading and widening has been done.

We can all rejoice in one very obvious and agreeable reflection, that in carrying out the numerous expensive and beneficial improvements, a large amount of money has been

paid to our own citizens. With it buildings have been erected, or repaired and improved, comforts multiplied, children better clothed and educated, laborers, mechanics, contractors, traders, and, in fact, nearly all citizens have received direct or remote benefit from it.

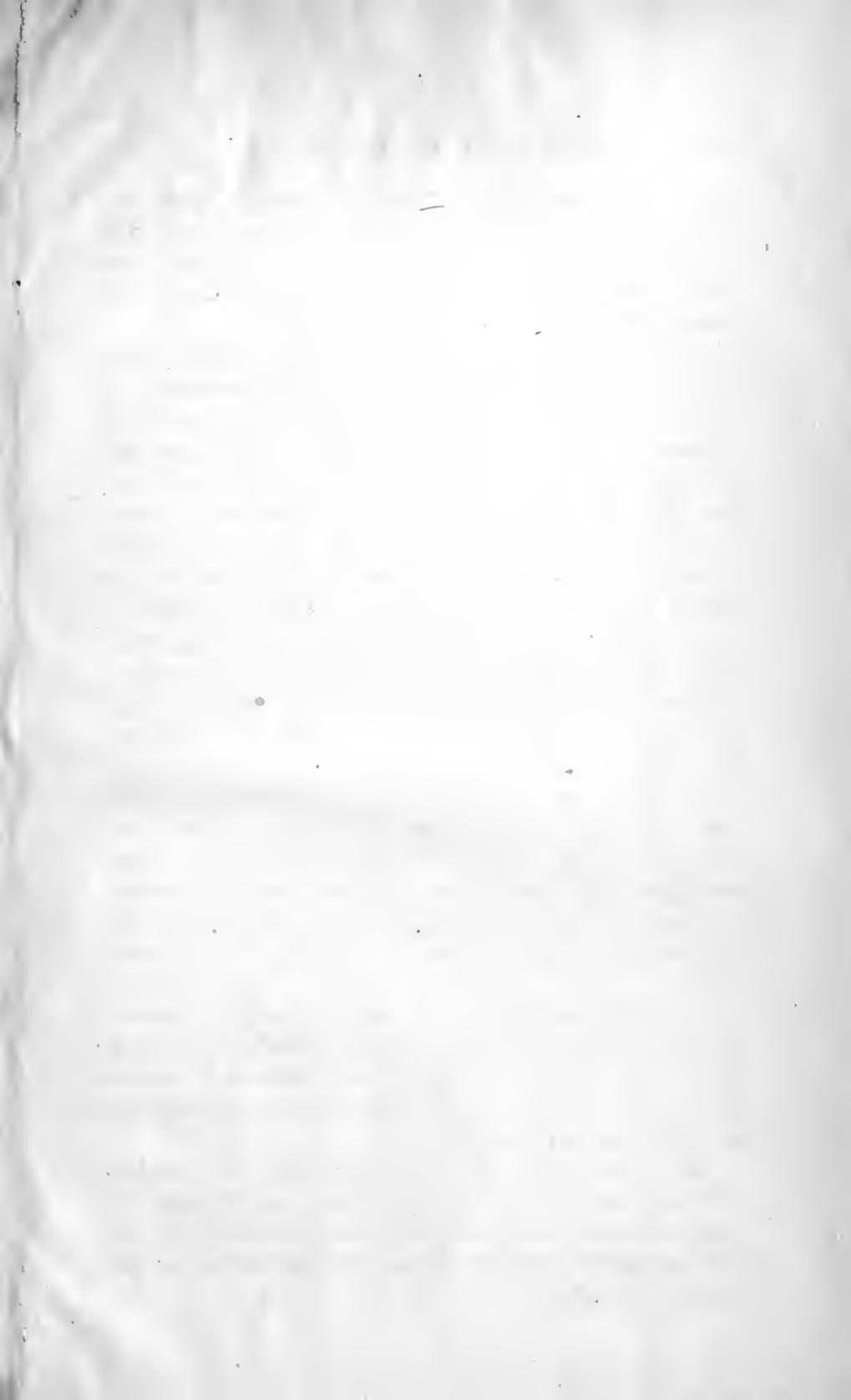
While in many places business has been stagnant, here there has been building, improvement, and expenditure on private account, before never equalled. The number of buildings, as appears by actual inquiry, erected during the past year, from the simple dwelling to the elegant mansion, have been 250, at an expense of over \$600,000, exclusive of the land. \$200,000 of this amount has been invested in good brick buildings. And the excellent quality of the whole, gives an average price of about \$2500 for each.

In closing our labors at this time, gentlemen, may we not forget the many agreeable hours we have passed together, and wherever our lots may be cast for the future, I doubt not many pleasing recollections will recall the two years that have now closed.

By discussion, interchange of opinion, taste and judgment, we have learned to treat with respect and liberality each other's differences, and I believe the acquaintances and friendships formed here, will abide with us forever. Be assured it is the number and quality of one's friends, and not his acres or dollars, that makes life rich and glorious.

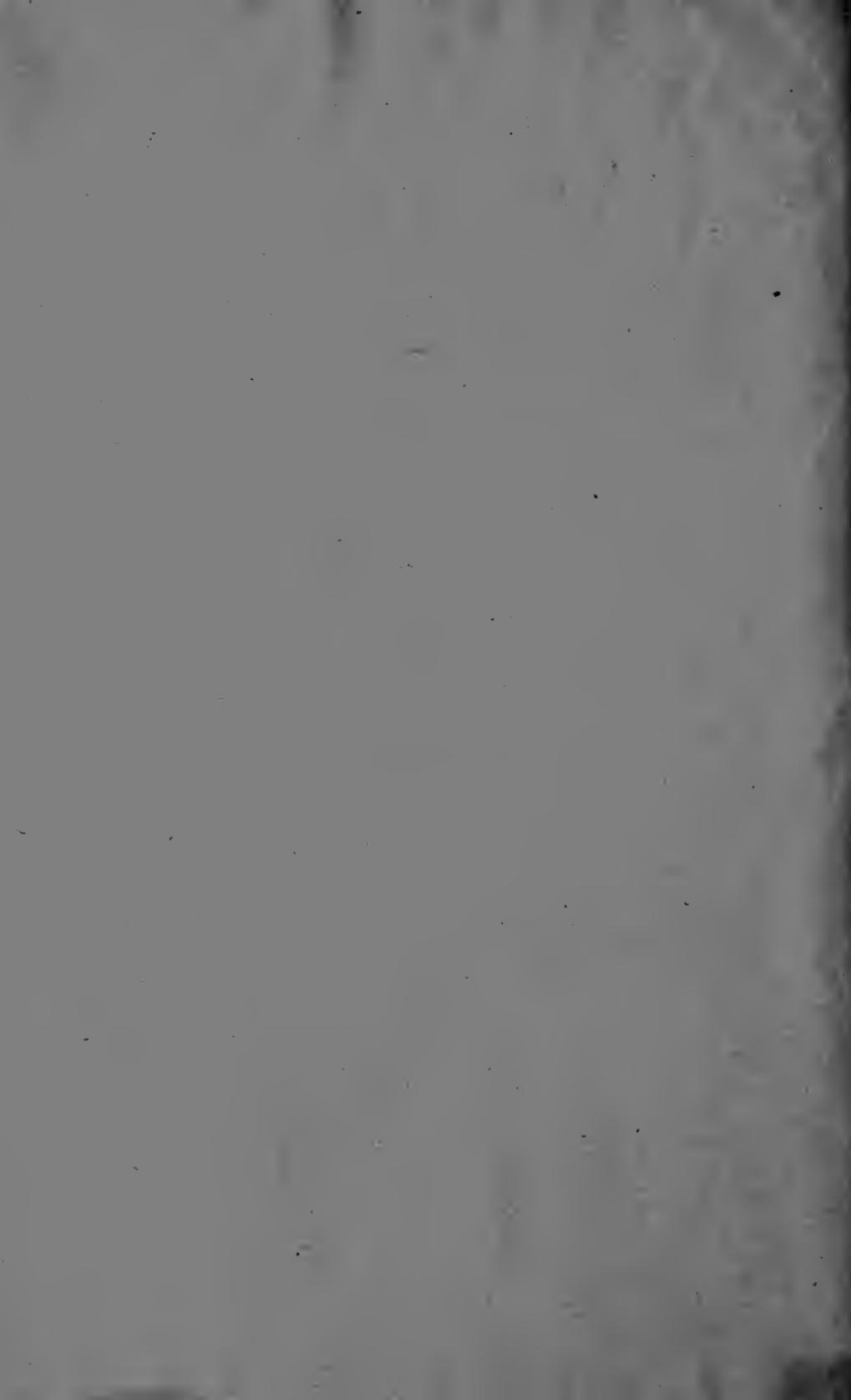
In conclusion, gentlemen, let me again tender to *you all* my deep sense of obligation for the forbearance and generosity which you have always been pleased to extend toward my many errors and omissions in the performance of duties new and untried.

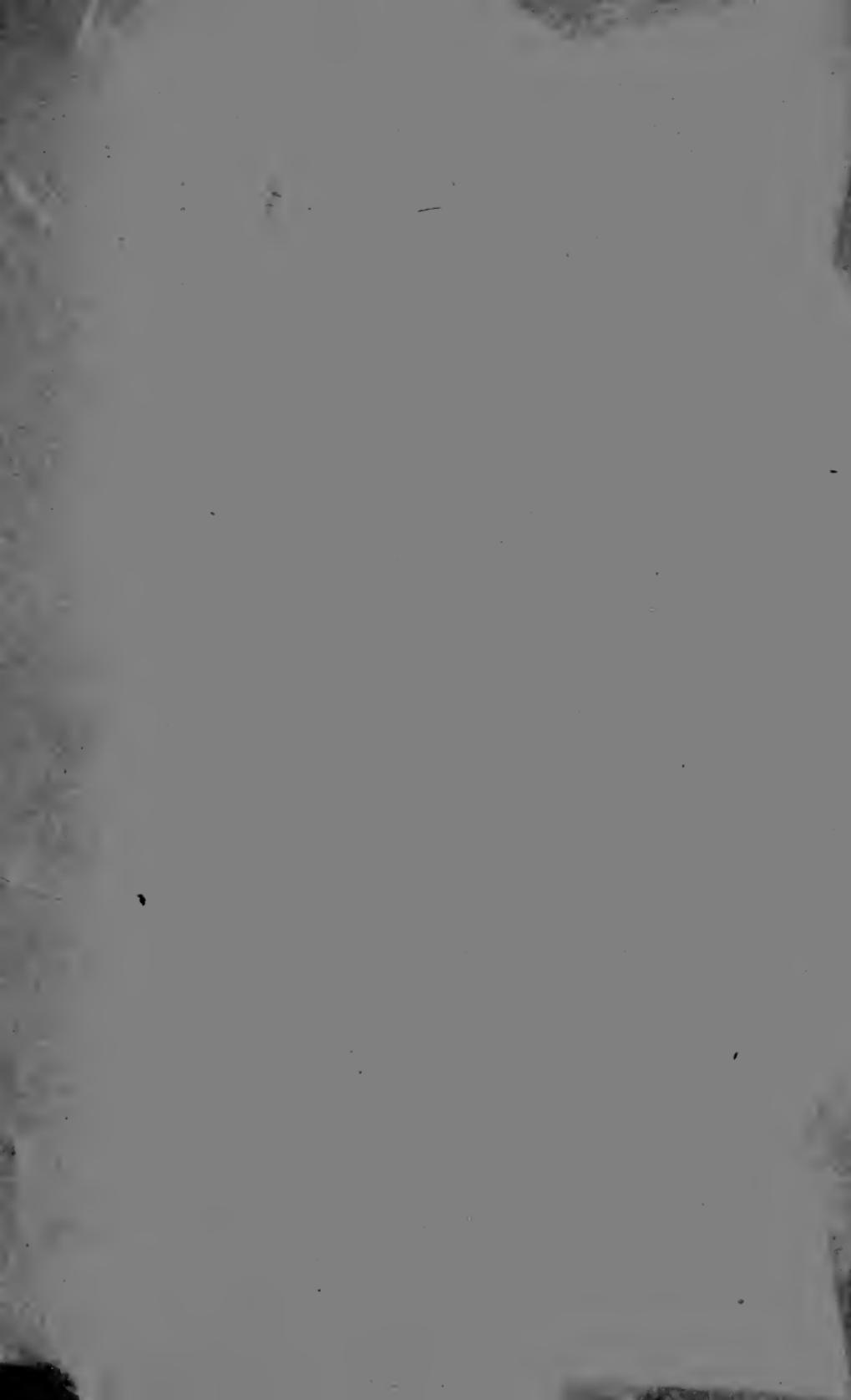
May you all live to a good old age, and in the smiles of friends, prosperity and happiness, look upon the improvements you have made with satisfaction, crowned by the test of time, that they have been for the welfare and prosperity of our beloved city.











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